**Directions: Read Article A and Article B. Answer the questions at the end. Add a total of 4 annotations/thoughts to the text for extra credit**

***Article A***

**MPAA Embraces More Informative Ratings With ‘Check The Box’**

By [Mark Deming](http://movies.yahoo.com/blogs/author/mark-deming/) | [Movie Talk](http://movies.yahoo.com/blogs/movie-talk/) – Tue, Apr 16, 2013 7:15 PM EDT

The Motion Pictures Association of America wants you to know not just what rating a film receives, but why it received it. And they're working harder to keep you informed.

Chris Dodd, chairman of the MPAA, spoke Tuesday at CinemaCon, the annual convention of the National Association of Theater Owners (NATO), and he announced that the MPAA would be launching a new campaign called "Check The Box" to make audiences more aware of the content in movies before they buy a ticket.

The MPAA is the organization responsible for America's movie rating system. While ratings featured in movie trailers, posters, and display ads already feature a box that summarizes the criteria that determined the movie's rating, Dodd said the "Check The Box" campaign will make these descriptions more prominent, and they'll also release a series of public service announcements encouraging parents to be more aware of the reasons a film received a certain rating and not just look to the rating itself.

"Throughout its existence, the goal of the rating system has never changed: to inform parents and allow them to make their own decisions, considering their children’s sensibilities and unique sensitivities," Dodd said. "In 1990, we took a significant step to advance that goal, introducing rating descriptors for every film that is rated PG or higher, giving parents a snapshot of the content in each movie that leads to its rating."

Dodd went on to say the "Check The Box" program "focuses on these descriptors, giving parents the information they need to navigate the rating system and movies coming to their theaters."

NATO chairman John Fithian joined Dodd at the podium and pledged his support for "Check The Box." "These changes make the rating and advertising process more transparent and user-friendly for parents and we are happy to support that endeavor," Fithian said.

"Check The Box" comes in the wake of a campaign by Vice President Joseph Biden to look to the causes of gun violence in America in the wake of the Newtown, Connecticut school shootings. Dodd and Fithian were among the entertainment industry figures who met with Biden, and it's believed that "Check The Box" was created to address concerns about violence in films seen by youngsters. A public service announcement released by the MPAA points out that two films rated PG-13 may have received the classification for very different reasons – one for "Intense Sci-Fi Action," the other for "Crude Humor and Sensuality" (personified in the ad by one man in a superhero costume and another wearing a shabby suit and Mardi Gras beads).

Fithian also spoke out on behalf of theater owners, saying that NATO takes ratings enforcement seriously and have been working harder to make the system work.

"A few weeks ago, the Federal Trade Commission released a report on its most recent undercover shopper survey with movie theaters, scoring their highest since these surveys began over a decade ago," Fithian said. "More than 3 in 4 underage teens were denied access to R-rated movies by ticket-sellers and ushers. This is a marked improvement in enforcement and a sign of the movie theater industry’s ongoing commitment to America’s parents."

***Article B***

3:02 p.m. April 19, 2013   
**New film ratings push only a good first step**  
**by**[**Steve Kabelowsky**](http://onmilwaukee.com/author/showauthor.html?id=172)  
  
The MPAA launched a new film ratings effort called "Check the Box."   
  
Inconsistency.

When looking at the films that come out of Hollywood, or the programming on the small screen, parents are given ratings to help them decide if the content is appropriate for their children.

As far as ratings go, in my opinion, they have been focusing on language and sexuality, but are far too inconsistent on violence.

And in an effort to "shock and awe" the largest audience possible, producers and directors have to use greater explosions, doing greater damage to people to please the audience – which has fewer entertainment dollars these days.

When I worked on advertising and marketing efforts for clients, there was a term we would use when the project would grow beyond its original scope. The client would seek more deliverables than originally estimated for. Sometimes, it would go the other way, and while working on something the artists and programmers would decide it needs more to be a complete project.

Either way, as one tries to manage a project, we do our best to fight the creep.

In movies and TV shows, we’ve seen a violence creep.

Tim Winter, president of the Parents Television Council called it "ratings creep" when he was interviewed by the [Christian Science Monitor](http://www.csmonitor.com/The-Culture/2013/0417/MPAA-movie-ratings-New-initiative-to-assist-parents-gets-mixed-reviews).

"Any information that is accurate is good for parents," Winter said, noting the proposed ratings changed moved forward by the Motion Picture Association of America.

Earlier this week at a convention of movie theater owners in Las Vegas, the MPAA announced the launch of a new initiative it is calling "Check the Box." The plan is to give parents more information as to why a film received a rating of PG or higher. We kind of have this format for television shows when a smaller "L" may be used to warn of foul language, or "V" for violence.

The MPAA plans to highlight those smaller designators a little larger, so parents can make informed decisions about what they let their children consume.

Like many critics that bashed this move, I too am skeptical how well this will work. I’m comfortable with saying, that on the surface, it is a good idea. However, it makes a pair of assumptions:

First, it is counting on legal guardians to take a proactive role in the lives of their children. While I do believe that most parents do this, I’m not ignorant to the fact of the many in our society that don’t. Stronger families make stronger communities. If the family isn’t functioning well, a ratings system isn’t going to help matters.

Second, we live in a violent world. The bombings in Boston reminded us how vulnerable we truly are to violence within our communities. I’m not ignorant to the violence that children are exposed to on a daily basis either, when they experience even verbal and sometimes physical abuse in their homes, on their playgrounds and in their neighborhoods.

Sometimes the storytelling on the big and small screens takes us to a place in which we actually live, where violence surrounds us. Sometimes filmmakers can do better, and tell better stories where people come together and overcome the hardships. The ratings will tell us, a little, of what’s in the film. But if the violence we see on a normal basis increases, we can bet we will see more of it in a PG-rated program.

**Web address:** [**http://onmilwaukee.com/articles/movieratings.html**](http://onmilwaukee.com/articles/movieratings.html)

1. What is the headline for each article?
2. Who is the author is each article?
3. Give a “quote” from each article.
4. What do you think of each “quote”?

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS need to be done in COMPLETE sentences and complete thoughts. One-two word answers will NOT count.

1. What do you think of the new “Check the Box” program?
2. Do you think it will help?
3. Do your parents pay attention to these ratings?
4. Do you think that ratings are important? Why or why not?